

AMBLER (J. G.)

MEMOIR OF  
DANIEL C. AMBLER, M. D.,

By  
J. G. AMBLER, M. D.,

*Read at the Anniversary of the*

SOCIETY OF DENTAL SURGEONS,

OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, 31<sup>ST</sup> 1876

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, APRIL 14<sup>TH</sup> 1876

AND PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE SOCIETY

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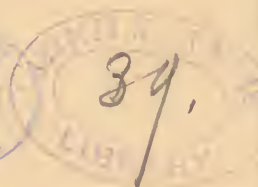
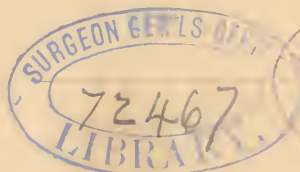
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1870.

## REPORT OF COMMITTEE, &c.

DEATH OF DR. D. C. AMBLER.—At a meeting of the Society of Dental Surgeons of the city of New York, held at their room, No. 24 Cooper Union, the death of D. C. Ambler, M. D., dentist, was announced to the meeting, when, on motion, a committee of three was appointed by the chair to draft suitable resolutions of the exemplary character and exalted professional worth of the deceased, which committee reported as follows :

“The unexpected close of an eventful life, in a career of enterprise and usefulness, cannot fail to arrest the attention of the most thoughtless, and shroud an appreciating community in the deepest gloom.”

Such was signally the case when the startling intelligence of the sudden death of Dr. D. C. Ambler, by drowning, on the 7th of April, in the St. John's River, Florida, reached us. In Dr. Ambler, we recognized an old familiar friend and professional brother, whom we all delighted to honor while living, and now sincerely mourn his death. Dr. Ambler was one of the pioneers in the profession of dentistry, one who labored hard to elevate the standard of professional excellence, and the science and art of dentistry was materially advanced by his scientific knowledge, and ingenuity, and to his experimental researches is our profession indebted for those improvements in mineral teeth, the manufacture of which has been carried on so extensively and with such perfection in this country ; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That this Society show our affection for his many virtues, and appreciation for the bright example of our departed friend and brother, by placing on record these expressions of our bereavement and sorrow for his departed worth.

*Resolved*, That our sympathies, true and heartfelt, are hereby tendered to the relatives, and friends of the deceased, in this sad and inscrutable dispensation of Providence.

*Resolved*, That Dr. John Gardner Ambler, one of our members, and a nephew of deceased, be requested to address the profession, at such time and place as may be convenient to himself, in an obituary or eulogy of the deceased.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

T. H. BURRAS, JOHN ALLEN, CHAUNCEY F. FITCH.	} Committee.
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*Resolved*, That these proceedings be published in one or more daily papers of this city and in the dental journals.

Dr. T. H. BURRAS, previous to introducing the speaker to the audience remarked :—

We meet here to commemorate the death of one we loved and respected. When the tomb is closed upon the mortal remains of those we loved, and we feel our hearts, as it were, crushed in the closing of its portals, who would accept the consolation that was bought by forgetfulness? Here let us weave a chaplet of fragrant flowers, and with the beauteous sympathies of our nature strew them around the memory of our departed friend and brother, and here let us renew our faith in the affectionate discharge of our duties to the living, and show that Angel foot-prints here have left their mark upon our very hearts.

## A D D R E S S .

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An eminent author remarks, with evident propriety, " The most solemn act of friendship is, to record the virtues of one, who, in life beloved, we are never again to commune with in this world."

Yet it is not the purpose of the writer, in any particular, to over-estimate the qualities and attainments of the subject of this memoir; but to give a plain, unvarnished history of his professional career, with a short sketch of his social and domestic life; and permit me here to say that we, as a profession, have been guilty of the sin of omission, to a lamentable extent, in failing to appreciate and make conspicuous in our professional archives, the virtues and social excellences of those members of our profession who, having elevated it by example and effort, and who, by unblemished reputation and unusual skill, have justly entitled themselves to more than a passing notice or a brief obituary sigh.

We have failed to recognise the services and abilities of those who have spent life and means to make our profession what it is to-day, and what it may be in the future, as illustrated in the unheeded passing away of such bright ornaments to our art and calling as Hayden, Harris, Allen and Townsend, all honored while living, and mourned when dead; yet, whose memories live not, except in the hearts of a few.

This occasion should, therefore, be fruitful of something better than a transient feeling—a mere emotion however deep—a passing expression of respect and admiration, however eloquent and sincere.

The highest honor that we could confer upon the memory of him whose character was adorned by so many virtues and attainments, and the noblest duty that we could perform would be, in our resolving to consecrate this hour, not only by our fraternal accord in acknowledging the worth, and our regret for the loss of the distinguished brother of whom we now particularly speak ; but, also, by the adoption of some rule by which merit, at all times and in every degree, shall be sure of due recognition, encouragement and a perpetuity of affectionate regard among us.

Says the poet, Gray :

“ Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear ;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.”

The sentiment is, also, too true in its general applicability ; but let us endeavor to mitigate the rigor of its reproof, at least with regard to ourselves, as a body of generous, faithful friends, who will, in all time to come, be promptly ready to develop the gem of genius, whatever may be the disadvantages of poverty or obscurity, and ever happy to transplant the flower of moral beauty from the desert of neglect to the genial soil and cheering atmosphere of an appreciating brotherhood.

Most confident I am that the living would thus be inspired with noble emulation, and the tribute of our tears for the departed would so bedew the garden of each member's heart that the abundant bloom and fragrance would leave no room for the weeds of vice and their noxious exhalations.

We owe it to our intelligence, our numbers and our respect for our organization, to devise some means whereby no member's claim to brotherly notice, while living, and his meed of a cherished and enduring recollection after death shall depend upon contingency, or the mere impulse of the moment.



Let us systematically institute the commemorative anniversary and oration. Art and the muse are also ever ready to assist emotion. Let us have the photograph, the painting and the bust—the bard and the deathless song; then our arduous and most beneficent, though unnoticed toil, will be greatly compensated by the assurance of an immortal fame, at least in the estimation and affection of our associates, and those who know us best, and true talent will find its utmost longing and highest aspirations satisfied with the bright promise of a name upon the record of

“The illustrious few, who were not born to die.”

We know from all the history of our race that amidst all the incongruities of man's character, and the inconsistencies of his purposes and actions there is one predominating desire ever in his mind and manifested in all his ways—the desire to be remembered.

So universal is this disposition, so obvious in every voluntary act, that it constitutes no slight argument for our essential immortality; for it is a maxim among philosophers that Nature's voice, apart from extraneous influences is true. And if there be an impulse in every breast prompting us to struggle for the perpetuation of our names after we shall have personally passed away, it is a fair deduction that nature herein teaches that immortality is possible to man.

This instinctive longing after a place in the record and memories of the future is exhibited in tokens as various as the caprices and dispositions of mankind, as exemplified by the stupendous pyramids—the magnificent mausoleum—the towering obelisk—the imposing monument and the life-like statue. Some, even, indeed, have chosen to be remembered with detestation rather than be blotted out of the annals of the race, as instanced by the sacking of cities, the mutilation of works of art, and most eminently in the atrocious ambition

of the wretch who fired the splendid temple of Diana at Ephesus, simply in the hope that his name might live, as a destroyer, if it could not as a benefactor.

The operation of this inherent impulse is seen at this day in the tombs that ornament our cemeteries, from the stately cenotaph, recording the name and virtues of one whose dust is absent, to the simple stone perpetuating in this upper world, the memory of some loved form that sleeps below.

What, indeed, but this very element in our nature stimulates mankind to action in all the affairs of life, urging us when indolent, and animating us when encountering opposition.

The soldier braves the danger of the field; the artist toils wearily on through privation and neglect; the student trims his midnight lamp; and the poet pours his numbers from a tortured heart, all in the endeavor to achieve a name that shall be honored, a memory that shall not sink into oblivion.

This Continent of ours, many islands of the sea, many cities, rivers, States and mountains, in their appellations, are tributary to this craving of our souls contributing thus, what they can to give immortality to the names they bear. Even the very stars that glitter in the dome of heaven, wear the proud blazonry of the great in science, commemorating throughout the universe the glory of many a mighty mind.

DANIEL COOLEY AMBLER whose past life and history we, this night, have convened to consider; whose virtues we are to commend, and whose traits of character, which will bear scrutiny without tarnish, it will be our aim to set before you as worthy of commendation and imitation; and I am delighted in being honored with the presence of my venerable friend, Dr. Elisha Baker, who knew him well, and will bear testimony as to the truth of what I say.

Francis the First having asked Castellan, Bishop of Orleans, whether he were of noble birth, "Sire," replied he, "Noah



had three sons in the Ark; I cannot say from which of them I descended." The same is true of him of whom we now speak. Sufficient, therefore, is it for us to state that his title to nobility is derived from a well-spent life.

He was born in this State, in the year, 1800, which, had he have lived to the present day would have made him sixty-nine years of age, and he frequently remarked that he was never at a loss to determine his age as he was as old as the almanac.

Of his ancestors it will be sufficient to say that they are traced to the Amblers of Wakefield, many of whom occupied conspicuous positions in Church and State. The judicial history of England carries the name upon its pages, and to this day Ambler's "Decisions and Reports," are among the standard works upon English law, and are to be found in most law libraries of this country.

As nearly as can be ascertained from family tradition and colonial history, three brothers came to this country in one of the vessels that immediately succeeded the *May Flower*. Two of them remained in the old colony of Massachusetts; one went to Virginia, and the Amblers, of Virginia have occupied a prominent position as of the "F. F. V." who, by marriage are connected with nearly all the oldest families of the Old Dominion. One of their finest estates and most aristocratic families were wiped, as it were, out of existence by the late war. Into this family Chief Justice Marshall married. They were also connected with the Custis family; one of which, as is well known, became the wife of George Washington. But as the subject of our eulogy was a descendant of one of the brothers who settled in Massachusetts, and whose descendants soon scattered throughout the Eastern States, and some in this State, and as in this country, a man is judged by what he is, rather than by what

his ancestors were, I will merely say, that in the early struggles for Independence, John Ambler, of Salem, Westchester county, gave to his country's service three sons; all that were then able to bear arms. Two of them, at the close of the war, were permitted to return to him again; the other, a prominent officer in our army, was intercepted while conveying orders to a division of the army, and literally cut to pieces, his fate being discovered by the arrival of his horse in camp without its rider, which caused the pursuit and defeat of a portion of the British army. Another son was in that memorable retreat on Long Island, which so shook the confidence of the people in their leader. But John Ambler, the father of the deceased, was permitted to serve through the entire war, and at its close, with his honorable discharge, at the age of twenty-four, being but seventeen when he entered the service of his country, to return to his father's house, as destitute, though without the sins of the returning prodigal; soon after which he married a Miss Cooley, of Salem, and after some experiments and efforts in mercantile life, finally settled in Chenango county as a farmer, the place being known to this day as "Ambler's Settlement." Here he reared a large family of children, and after living to good old age, departed this life honored and respected by all; leaving behind him three sons and four daughters. The youngest son was our lamented friend, D. C. Ambler, who, from early youth, evinced a strong desire to acquire a medical education; and as soon as his academic education was completed he commenced the study of medicine with a country physician but finding that it would be necessary, if he would become proficient, to seek the best institutions, although, at that time, the certificate of the physician with whom he studied, would have been a sufficient passport to practice; yet, as that was not the highest testimonial within

his reach, he determined to come to New York, and in 1821 we find him a student in the office of Dr. Valentine Mott, who, at that time, was on the high road to that position which he soon after attained: namely, that of the first surgeon of the country. He soon became a favorite student, and was the recipient of many favors, which greatly facilitated his progress in the study of medicine. After graduating at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, with honors second to none, he commenced practice under the instruction of Dr. Mott, but possessing fine mechanical and artistic talent, and becoming acquainted with Dr. Rossiter, who was then practicing dentistry in the city, he decided to abandon the practice of medicine and study dentistry, which he did, and with all the knowledge he could then attain, coupled with his medical education, he commenced the practice of dentistry. He soon found how perfectly barren was the field, how little was known upon the subject. In fact it was but little more than a tinker's trade, but it afforded a fine field for the exercise of those peculiar qualities which distinguished him through life, ever learning, ever investigating, ever analyzing, ever criticising, ever endeavoring to improve, never satisfied with what was; because he thought it could be made better, and to the accomplishment of this his mind was ever upon the rack. The first five years of his professional life was spent in the South. There he formed acquaintances and associations which were ever fondly cherished, and among his large circle of friends many were from the sunny South. It was here that he formed the acquaintance of C. Starr Brewster, at that time practicing dentistry in Charleston, S. C., but who soon after went to France and there created or made a reputation for the American Dentists abroad, far excelling that of any other nationality, and for which we should ever cherish a feeling of

grateful pride. This acquaintance ripened into intimacy and mutual assistance to each other, and I have had, until recently, a tooth made by them, I think in 1827, shaped as an ordinary pivot tooth, with a platina wire inserted at the base, intended to be introduced into the fang, but by some misfortune it has vanished. They continued their experiments together until Dr. Ambler came North. Dr. Brewster very soon followed him to New York.

In 1828, with the concurrent advice of his esteemed medical preceptor, Dr. Mott, he commenced the practice of dentistry in this city, entering the lists as an aspirant for public favor, in the field with Rossiter, Greenwood, Parkhurst, Trenor, Parmley and others; and from this time up to the day of his death that investigating, experimenting feature of his organization was ever conspicuous.

The profession or art of dentistry at this time was in its swaddling clothes, just beginning to throw off the tinker's garb, and to demand recognition as a distinct branch of medicine, if not a profession or art.

How crude to us are the specimens of mechanical dentistry then presented to the public as great achievements in the art or mystery of dentistry. This may almost be claimed as the Elephantine age, for the most beautiful substitutes for human teeth were carved from the elephant's tusk. This was one of art's triumphs, for the toothless maiden was by this magical wand transformed into a thing of life and beauty. I need not detail to my hearers the process by which this transformation was effected, suffice it to say that the mighty giant of the forest, though dead, found himself perpetuated, nay, canonized by beauty's rosy lips.

What, think you, was the next grand step in dental progress? I trust I shall offend the tender sensibilities of none, however fastidious they may be, when I state that the impor-

tation of human teeth from the hospitals of France was no inconsiderable item of imports in this city, at this time, and those teeth—yes, those teeth, found their way into the mouths of the elite of this city. Please to give this fact one thought, then tell me whether we are progressing backwards. “Query,” by what great hocus pocus will these scattered members of the human frame ever be gathered together again? “Echo answers—how!”

In the poetic language of Solymon Brown, the dental poet :

“ Fair science, thus with timely care combined,  
Becomes the faithful friend of human kind.”

I have alluded to these incidents, around which so many associations cluster, in order to show you, pro and con, the then and the now.

I have, in my cabinet of curiosities, human teeth set with great skill and nicety of finish, upon ivory and sea horse base, that were creditable to the artist or the mechanic, as you may please to designate him, but those, to us, disgusting objects of deformity, were soon to be eclipsed by a much more mysterious agency: namely, earth and fire. And at this interesting epoch in dental history, I claim, as the great champion of the mineralogical age, the subject of this obituary.

Although France had given us some attempts at artificial imitations of the human teeth, which, when inserted, were about as correct imitations as split beans or pumpkin seeds; I say, that I claim for D. C. Ambler the credit of making the first mineral tooth that could claim any resemblance to the human tooth, although several aspirants for this honor are now in the field; yet, the first approach to a correct imitation of the human tooth rightly belongs to D. C. Ambler. I say rightly, and will add, justly. But, my friends, this was no spasmodic springing into life, but the result of long, persist-



ent, patient, untiring effort, not the result of a few days' or months' experiments, but of the assiduous labor of years, of that determined spirit that had set his heart upon its accomplishment, and knew no such word as fail, although his efforts and experiments were often of the most discouraging character.

Let me recount some of the perplexities that surrounded him, for be it known to you all, that about this time, as almanac makers would say, a sapling sprang up beside this genii of the furnace, in the person of your humble servant, and well do I remember the scenes enacted in that laboratory, for, being the youngest pupil in this school, the rudimental drudgery fell to my share, and if there be anything calculated to make a deeper and more lasting impression upon the minds of any human being, it is the days of the freshman or youngest apprentice.

Picture to yourselves a trio of workers endeavoring to create something human out of the flinty rock. I say, picture to yourselves a trio of workers engaged in pounding, pulverizing, grinding, moulding, enamelling and shaping a resemblance of the human tooth out of a cobble stone and a huge lump of clay, and you have the life picture of the spirits at work in that laboratory; and on which the wearers of artificial teeth (and their number is not so small as to require the microscope to discover them,) should ever invoke the choicest of heaven's blessings. Why Job was a cipher in patience compared with them. Picture to yourselves the result of a week's untiring labor spread out upon small slabs or slides, ready for the finishing touch of the principal of the establishment. See with what an anxious countenance and expression they watch the introduction of the carefully prepared embryo teeth into the furnace, expecting to see them converted into the long-sought-for jewels to adorn the human



face divine : and as they are carefully withdrawn from this fiery furnace, with each anxious eye strained to its utmost to catch the first glimpse of that sparkling jewel, and then to find these beautifully shaped specimens, taking to themselves the forms of peas, or of beans ; then tell me whether there is such a virtue as patience and find it exemplified by the repetition, week after week, with some variation of quantity and proportion at each successive experiment, ever finding some excuse for the failure ; as a little too much clay, a trifle more flux, a little less kaolin, color a very little darker, or heat not quite so high ; and, when at a loss to suggest a true solution of the cause that produced the effect we would fall back upon the last refuge of lies ; namely, the devil is in the muffle ; then up and at it again.

These, gentlemen, are some of the trials surrounding the early experiments in tooth making. Is there no credit to him who endures all this, yet perseveres, and finally attains his object ? If not, pray tell me what human kind can do to deserve the commendation of his fellow-men ? If he who makes two spears of grass grow where but one grew before, is a public benefactor, pray tell me what title to bestow upon him, who so far imitates nature as almost to defy detection, both in beauty and utility ? I answer, in the words of Dr. Prewster, when referring to the discovery of arsenic as an agent for destroying the life and vitality of exposed nerves of teeth, by Dr. Spooner ; " He deserves a monument as high as Mount Olympus, and solid as the everlasting granite." As another instance of unappreciated worth, this same Dr. Spooner lives only in the memories of a few.

I repeat, that to Dr. Daniel C. Ambler belongs the credit of giving an impetus to experimental efforts which has resulted in giving to the world a perfect and complete imitation of one of nature's brightest jewels. I also claim for him

a high position as an operator, whose work will bear comparison with the best of that day ; and do not accuse me of being over-modest or presumptuous, when I claim also for him the principle of atmospheric pressure, as applied to metallic plates for artificial teeth. In 1830 he inserted teeth upon this principle ; he also moulded and soldered teeth to plates by the insertion of a platina pin at the end or heel of the tooth before baking, which was fitted into a hole corresponding in size in the plate, then soldered on the inner or concave side, which plate was retained in the mouth by so-called atmospheric pressure and in his laboratory plaster of paris was first used as a support or stay to retain teeth in their position, so as to be soldered to the plate by a student whose name is familiar to you all ; and if Dr. Burras, the chairman of the committee, were not present I would give you his name, and him the credit for this and other valuable improvements.

But I must pass rapidly over details, as the time will not permit me to give them more than a passing notice.

The turnkey, that instrument of torture, which has been cursed and recursed by thousands, and finally condemned to all eternity, received one of its first blows at the hands of D. C. Ambler. Well do I remember the long series of attempts to form and shape a forcep so bent, twisted and shaped as to enable the operator to clasp and extract, by direct pull, any tooth in the head : and in order to get the shape as nearly perfect as possible, patterns were made in lead, and often have my poor jaws and mouth been twisted into all manner of distortions in experiments of this kind, and, when they were pronounced correct, these crude, outlandish things were passed into the hands of another co-worker in the field of progress. I need not say to my professional brethren, that I refer to J. D. Chevalier, to whose skill and ingenuity

the downfall of that monster is mostly attributable, and to him are we greatly indebted for our own ability to perform most of our operations as well as we do. We are all, this day, better dentists for J. D. Chevalier having lived, and may he still live and make us still better by giving us new improvements that will enable us to further excel.

I could further enumerate valuable improvements in instruments and dental appliances made at the suggestion and under the direction of D. C. Ambler, which were offered to and adopted by the profession, but time will not permit. I have alluded particularly to his efforts to perfect and produce a correct imitation of the human tooth, which would be sufficiently strong, yet so translucent as to relieve it of that opaque and death-like appearance which characterized most of the specimens heretofore made. After a tolerably correct imitation had been made he turned his attention and directed his efforts to carving teeth, so as to be fitted and baked on the plate, thus forming a complete set of artificial dentures in one solid piece. The great difficulty to be overcome was shrinkage or contraction. His first efforts in this line were, by moulding the body or material from which the teeth were made, over a strip of platina, which extended through them, somewhat resembling a string of beads. When carved and separated in this form they were fitted to the plate, then baked; the shrinkage being considerable, the space required filling up with new material, the teeth were re-shaped, re-fitted and re-baked: this process was repeated until the desired object was attained.

This process, so tedious and uncertain in its results, was soon abandoned, and after various other devices were tried, he commenced to carve in sections or blocks, which experiments he continued, with more or less success, up to the time of his leaving New York to follow a bubble which soon burst.

But before we trace him through this new field of investigation and experiment, permit me, for one moment, to go back to his early efforts in tooth making.

The American Institute had but recently been organized, and in the fall of 1833 held its fair or exhibition, which he considered an opportunity to bring his improvements to notice, not to be neglected: he, therefore, prepared and presented for exhibition and competition specimens of what he called SILICEOUS METALLIC TEETH, it being the first exhibition of the kind ever made, for which he was awarded and received a gold medal, (*which medal is now in my possession.*)

This report and award uncaged those foul spirits of envy and jealousy, and their venomous tongues sought to undo what the American Institute had done. Reports were soon in circulation questioning the fact, and imputing direct misrepresentation, all of which could be disproved, and have been disproved by the facts; and the calumny refuted and the calumniator placed on record in one of the courts of New York as a libeler; but secret calumnious insinuations and underhand slanders could not be silenced.

" Slander, whose venom'd dart,  
Scarce wounds the hearing  
While it stabs the heart."

It, therefore, became him to let envy kill itself by living it down.

As an instance of his appreciation of nature, and his effort to imitate her, permit me to relate the following incident:

At one of the exhibitions of the American Institute, while the teeth which he had presented for competition, were being examined by the committee, one of them objected to the shape of the teeth, saying they were not smooth on the surface, nor straight across the edge. To this objection he answered that very few natural teeth were entirely smooth and even,

but the reverse; and he had taken great pains to imitate the wavy surface of the natural tooth, thereby depriving it of the square and block-like appearance, and make the imitation so perfect as to prevent detection when placed side by side with the natural ones. Reply was made, with a great show of self-importance, "Sir, we wish imitations of perfect not imperfect teeth; we do not wish to imitate defects." Dr. A., turning to this specimen of egotism, said, "Sir, you probably know that Dr. Scudder," (who had just established himself in New York, and was becoming quite celebrated as an oculist,) "considers a black eye the perfection of beauty. Now, sir, your eyes are blue; suppose by some accident you were to lose one of your eyes, and on going to him to obtain an artificial one to supply its place, what would you think were he to say to you, I will put you in a very beautiful black eye, far handsomer than your blue one. Would you allow him to do so? I think you would say to him, no, sir, I wish as perfect an imitation of my remaining eye as you can give me; notwithstanding the black eye might be considered more perfect or beautiful than the blue. So say I, with respect to the teeth. My object is to imitate nature; put a smooth, white tooth beside a smooth, white tooth; and a dark, uneven one beside a dark, uneven one." Would you not all think the answer and explanation correct and satisfactory? But no, that feature was condemned. Impartial judges! This and the other equally wise and sage conclusions, satisfied him of the fact of his being pre-judged; he, therefore, withdrew his specimens from competition before such impartial judges; such unfair and indirect opposition to and violation of the aims and objects of the American Institute.

"How few there are who dare be just to merit not their own."



I will not detain you with further details of his efforts in this field of labor, suffice it to say, that his competitor, at the time referred to, informed me personally, years after, that the features peculiar to his teeth were deserving of commendation and reward, and would doubtless have received it, notwithstanding the objections referred to, had they not been withdrawn.

He continued his experiments simultaneously, and with friendly conjunction with Dr. Brewster, and Drs. Harwood and Tucker, of Boston, the latter being a pupil of his, men of sterling integrity, and not disposed to abate one iota of credit so justly due, and so honorably earned.

At the time when he temporarily withdrew from this field of investigation and labor, a very correct imitation of the human tooth was produced, and many were the regrets expressed by him that his evil genius should have led him astray, and by false tokens and bright visions of success, which, though attractive to his feelings and impulses, by a combination of circumstances, proved a splendid failure; yet the investigations then made were not without their good result. I allude to the manufacture of oil from cotton seed. The thing itself was no failure; oil, well adapted to various uses was obtained, and all the arrangements were so combined as to bring about the desired result; but the enterprise itself was a failure, attributable to the financial crisis of 1836 and 1837, and the greedy cupidity of the cotton planters, who, blind to their own interests, as soon as they discovered that any use could be made of the cotton seed, immediately advanced the price from ten to thirty cents a bushel, which, of course, killed the goose that laid the golden egg. After the death of the goose and the crash referred to, we find him emerging from the ruins and returning to his first love. In the meantime, however, others had entered the field, and



were reaping the harvest from seed sown by his own hands ; and permit me to say that, by a long series of experiments in this branch, Dr. John Allen, of this city, has brought to a degree of perfection, unequaled in the world, the manufacture of full or continuous gum teeth, for which the world owes him more than it will ever pay.

In 1838 Dr. Ambler returned to the north, but having sold out his dental establishment and practice before going south, he had shut himself, as it were, out of the city, so far as dental practice was concerned, and while on a visit to some friends in the northern part of the State, an opening seemed to present itself which he embraced, and was again at the operating chair, where he remained, with occasional intermissions, until Divine Providence clearly pointed southward again, in the failing health of his wife, to whom he was devotedly attached. His unselfish nature here shone out in bright colors, sacrificing every personal consideration, he determined to leave nothing untried that presented the least shadow of a chance for her restoration ; but, alas ! that unyielding and unrelenting enemy, (the consumption,) had too firm a hold to be shaken off by any device of man ; yet his efforts were so far successful as to prolong life for several years, but were at last compelled to yield to the fell destroyer.

It was while on his journey south that his interest in the elevation of his profession was manifested by his taking an active part in the formation of the society of Dental Surgeons of the State of New York.

In 1846 he presided at a meeting of dentists, which resulted in the call of a convention of the dentists of the State, out of which grew the society referred to ; this was the first convention of dentists ever convened, and the first effort ever made to elevate the whole profession ; societies had been formed upon the procrustean bed principle, which were con-

fined to a select few, and those were, for the most part, compelled to follow master or bury their own manhood in sycophantic submission to the great controlling spirit at its head ; but, thanks to the noble men, who, being unwilling longer to be bound by the arbitrary rules and enactments of these would be dictators, threw off their shackles and proclaimed themselves free. Among these were found the familiar names of Baker, Allen, Townsend, Hawes, Lovejoy and others.

D. C. Ambler soared above all selfish, sordid considerations, and sought his own elevation in the elevation of the profession ; for this he earnestly contended, and in justification of the action which brought into life this liberal and democratic association remarked : " If by this means we can make good dentists out of bad ones, our mission will be complete." Although a firm advocate for the right of private judgment, his kind, self-sacrificing disposition secured the friendship and respect of all ; he possessed, in a wonderful degree, the faculty of pleasing, which is a very difficult one for a dentist in this refined age to attain. His charity was unbounded and bore the genuine scriptural stamp. His love of his kind and kindred was strong and constant, ever solicitous for the benefit of others. This characteristic is exemplified in the very last act of his life, for he met his death in endeavoring to promote the interests and gratify the taste of his medical brother who shared his fate, having been on a trip up the St. John's river, to show and explain to him the fertile fields of that section of the State, and point out the advantages which might escape the casual observer.

He was not only a Christian gentleman, a true friend, with hand and heart ever open to relieve and mitigate the sorrow of others and benefit his kind, but a true patriot ; a true and sincere lover of his country. He was a Christian,

not only in theory but in practice. He was a consistent member of the Episcopal Church, and did much to promote its interests and further its usefulness, particularly in his adopted State. His religious character was exemplified by his unmurmuring submission to Divine Providence in the removal of his wife and children; for in the brief space of five years he consigned to the cold grave the companion of his youth and manhood; a bright and promising son, who bid fair to be all that a fond parent could wish or desire, and on whom a father's hope and pride were centered; also a loving and fondly cherished daughter, whose qualities of mind and heart endeared her to all, and to whom he looked (after his son's death), as the companion and solace of his old age, and in whom his love for wife and son seemed merged or concentrated; but, alas! the decree had gone forth and she, too, must die. Can a more severe test of Christian fortitude and submission be found than in these instances of unmurmuring yielding of life's choicest treasures and love's tenderest ties, thus drying the springs whence hope should flow? We might well say to him, in the words of Mrs. Hemans, "Let them die, Let them die now, while they are children, so the heart shall wear their beautiful image, all undimmed within it to the last."

I said he was a Christian gentleman and true friend. Says Ford, "I read no difference between these words—lord and gentleman—more than in the sounds, for aught that appears, I believe the latter is as noble as the first, and I am sure, more ancient."

"Titles of honor add not to his worth, who is himself an honor to his title."

In all the walks and relations of life, his kind, social and genial traits of character were ever marked, and the universal esteem and regard of all with whom he came into contact,

fully warrants us in bestowing upon him the appellation of Christian gentleman. He was a true patriot, one who deeply deplored and used his influence to prevent the late civil war; and, although he could himself say with the poet:

"Sweet clime of my kindred, blessed land of my birth,  
The fairest, the dearest, the brightest on earth:  
Where e'er I may roam, how e'er blest I may be  
My spirit instinctively turns unto thee."

Yet, he could, with equal sincerity and honesty of purpose, exclaim

"Florida! Florida! Heaven's blessings attend her,  
While we live, we will cherish, love and defend her,  
Tho' the scorner may sneer at, and witlings defame her,  
Our hearts swell with gladness, whenever we name her."

Florida had become his adopted State, and there he intended to live and die; his interests were her interests. Although an enemy to slavery, he was equally opposed to immediate emancipation. Never a slave owner himself, yet he thought and contended that the interests of the negro were in gradual emancipation, as did very many others, who, nevertheless, sustained the Government in its efforts to subdue the rebellion.

As before stated, he deplored and deeply regretted the rebellion, but when the step was taken he no longer opposed it, and immediately turned his attention to the relief of the necessities of the people. As they were cut off from the North, various articles necessary to the comfort of the people were difficult to obtain; among them were salt and soap. His universality of talent and peculiar adaptability to circumstances enabled him, very soon, to succeed in the manufacture of these articles to a considerable extent.

Although tacitly acquiescing in the efforts to sustain the rebellion, yet, at the first opportunity that presented itself,

he advised the Mayor of Jacksonville (who was a partner of his in a mercantile house there), to surrender the city to the Federal forces, which was done, and had the forces remained in possession of it, much of the evil that was the result of the withdrawing of the troops, would have been prevented; but as it is no part of my duty or intention to criticise or commend our nation's doings, I will merely state that Dr. Ambler embraced the first opportunity that presented itself to come North and recuperate, and make preparations to return, carrying with him everything within his reach that he thought would conduce to the prosperity and interests of the State.

It would afford me pleasure, and I may, at some future time, embrace an opportunity to give you a sketch of the incidents in his life during the great struggle; but fearing that I have already wearied you in this long detail of facts and incidents, I will merely read at the close of this address extracts from the Florida papers, which will show you the estimation in which he was held there by those who knew him well. Also a few letters selected from among the many received from North and South, all bearing the same testimony and breathing the same spirit, compared with which all that I have said to you to-night is but as the passing cloud and early dew. The spontaneous gushings of sincere and honest hearts, bearing voluntary testimony to those qualities and traits of character which make up the noblest work of God, an honest man; and let these be his epitaph.

Such, gentlemen, is a summary of the life of our departed brother. Is it not worthy of imitation? Can we not say, and that too in sincerity and truth, the profession and the world have been benefitted by the efforts and example of Daniel C. Ambler, who was so suddenly and mysteriously taken away?



Muse of affection ! bring the harp of solace.  
Tuneful with sorrow's melancholy lay ;  
For, with the fragrance from the land flowers,  
Comes a dark shadow o'er affection's day.

Tell us in music's sad, yet soothing numbers,  
All that the aching bosom longs to know ;  
How, in the twilight, on the darksome waters,  
Sank a frail shallop to the caves below.

How, as leviathan o'erwhelms the minnow,  
Thund'ring through ocean, in his awful wrath,  
So the huge steamer, like a fiery dragon,  
Buried our brother in its billowy path.

How a strong swimmer, buffeted the surges,  
Battled a moment in a hopeless strife ;  
Gave his meek spirit to the waiting Angels,  
Ended the sorrows of a noble life.

It was when sunset shrouded all the heavens,  
Leaving more radiant the evening star ;  
Emblems befitting a great soul's departure,  
Leaving its beauty, still to shine afar.

Though death's dark shadow curtaineth the pillow,  
Where the brave hero evermore shall lie ;  
Still the bright glory of transcendent virtue,  
Tells us his memory can never die.

Lover and husband, father, friend and patriot,  
Artist and scholar, all in him combined ;  
With the calm lustre of the humble Christian,  
Perfect in one great, gentle, genial mind.

Ah ! who the anguish of our heart can measure,  
That such exalted worth hath passed away,  
God ! his example may we ever follow,  
Till we rejoin him in Eternal Day.



*Extracts from the Florida Times.*

The unexpected close of an eventful life in a career of enterprise and usefulness, cannot fail to arrest the attention of the most thoughtless, and will shroud an appreciating community in the deepest gloom.

Such was signally the case in our city on the evening of the 4th inst., when the startling intelligence of the sudden death of Dr. D. C. Ambler was announced through our streets. Every one felt a solicitude in the untimely fate of one, who, with a devotion unparalleled, had expended his energies and his means towards the improvement of his adopted city and State. From the want of data, it is not in the power of the friend who pens this notice, although intimately acquainted with the deceased for several years, to do justice to his memory by giving even an epitome of his respected and eventful life. His intellect was vigorous, his zeal untiring, and his energy and enterprise was limited only by his means, which have been freely devoted, more for the benefit of the community in which he lived than for himself or his own personal and pecuniary interests.

In the loss of such a citizen, all are deeply sensible that a true friend and benefactor has been taken from us. His age was about sixty-seven years, he was a native of the State of New York, where he was educated. He graduated in the city of New York as a doctor of medicine, where, for several years, it is believed, he practiced his profession. Subsequently his mechanical turn induced him to devote himself to the practice of dentistry, which he has followed ever since. This branch of science and art has been materially advanced by his scientific knowledge and ingenuity and to his experimental researches in chemistry is that profession indebted for the introduction of the mineral teeth which have proved so great a blessing to those who have been obliged to substitute an article so necessary to our health and comfort, and for which he has received highly appreciative testimonials from scientific associations in different parts of the country. Several years in his early life he spent in the South, and for a considerable period was a resident of Columbia, South Carolina. In 1846 he removed to Florida and has ever since been a resident of Jacksonville, and has been fully identified with the improvements of his State and city. Since his removal to Florida he has been called upon to part with an estimable wife and son and daughter, leaving but one son to lament his untimely fate.

Since the residence of Dr. Ambler among us the State as well as the city of his adoption, has received the impress of his enterprising spirit. His extensive acquaintance among the planters of the State, has been productive of improved modes of agriculture, and in various ways the resources of the country have been developed.

A few years since he introduced an improved breed of cattle suited to the pasturage found here, also, improved horses, and subsequently an improved breed of sheep has been introduced into localities that seemed suited to their successful propagation, and at the time of his death he was engaged in the introduction and culture of the grape, upon a large scale, for the purpose of manufacturing wine. In short he has not only been instrumental in carrying forward every good work, calculated to benefit the country, but has been himself the pioneer of most of the enterprises that he has recommended to his fellow citizens.

His knowledge of almost all the vocations and pursuits pertaining to an organized community were extensive and not of a superficial character, but was critical. His mind seemed to grasp the whole subject at once, and to be able to detect the fallacies which so often encumber useful theories, and to apply principles of science in new and untried combinations. He had an inventive mind, but so far as I am informed, he has applied for few patents for improvements that he has made, although as well entitled to them as scores who yearly throng the Patent Office with their models and designs.

In this, as in every other act of his life, he seemed less thoughtful of self and personal interest than of the benefit he might confer upon the community in which he lived. To the other attributes of a good citizen and man he added those of a humble and sincere Christian. For years he has been a consistent member and communicant of the Episcopal Church, to whose progress and welfare he has been a beloved supporter and contributor. His charity was after the scripture rule and unostentatious.

His remains were followed to their burial by a large train of sympathizing friends, and were interred by the joint rites and ceremonies of his Church and of the fraternity of Masons of which also he was a valued member. May he rest in peace, after a life of useful labors.

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JACKSONVILLE, April 7, 1866.

Our city was startled about 10 o'clock on Wednesday evening last, by the rapidly spreading intelligence that Dr. D. C. Ambler was drowned. Alas! the news proved too true. We have been able to learn that our most highly esteemed fellow citizen, Dr. Ambler, accompanied by Mr. Sheldon, of Long Island, N. Y., and two colored men were returning to the city in a sail boat after having been on a trip up the river, while the steamer *Sylvan Shore*, Captain Tucker, was going up. By one of those singular fatalities of circumstances, which no speculation can explain, the boat was run upon by the steamer, which caused her to capsize; although, as we learn, an effort had been made to back water when she had been

suddenly desried. Captain Tucker, with that promptness of humanity which distinguishes him, at once put out a boat to the relief of the party, when the body of Dr. Ambler was found clinging to a portion of plank, but lifeless, and one of the colored men was rescued from the water. Mr. Sheldon, and the other colored man were not seen after the catastrophe, and must have sunk instantaneously. Every effort was made on board the *Sylvan Shore* to resuscitate the body of the doctor but to no avail, while she was returning to her wharf with the body.

No event has occurred in this city, since our knowledge of it, which cast so deep a gloom over the hearts of our people as this painful one, which has so ruthlessly torn from us one of the conspicuously brightest and best of her old and respected citizens, for who knew Dr. Ambler but to respect and love him?

His unfortunate companion, Mr. Sheldon, was a stranger in our midst; but we learn that he was a gentleman of character and means, who was on a visit to this section of the State with a view of making a purchase of lands on the St. Johns; and it was with this object that he had accompanied Dr. Ambler up the river. He leaves a stricken wife and child in this city, who had accompanied him South, and for whose sudden bereavement we sincerely unite in the sympathy which, we know, is felt throughout the community in her loss.

Of the colored man drowned we have been able to learn nothing definite.

We have not the space, even if we had the data at hand, to pay a merited tribute of respect to our lost friend and fellow citizen, Dr. Ambler, who is so extensively known for his virtue, probity and enterprise of character throughout the greater portion of Florida, and of the unfortunate stranger who has been cut off in the prime of life, we know nothing, but yet know that his fate is sincerely deplored by our people, and that every effort will be made to recover his body, and pay to it the honors of a Christian people. Nor are we regardless of the colored man who met the same sad fate. He too, has his friends, who, though humbler, will none the less mourn him. May He, who only can, temper the grief of the stricken, and bring good out of the Providences which fall so heavily on the hearts of the bereaved.

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BOSTON, May 29th, 1866.

DR. J. G. AMBLER.—DEAR SIR.—I received yours, of May 18th, containing the sad intelligence of your uncle's death, of which I had not heard. My mind is full of pleasant memories of him. It was my good fortune to meet him in Columbia, South Carolina, in the year 1826, and it was at

his suggestion and encouragement that I concluded to pursue the study of Dentistry; proposing to give me all the aid in his power, but with his usual good judgment, strongly urged me, if I would be a useful and successful Dentist, to unite with my studies of Dentistry that of Medicine. After attending a course of lectures in Charleston, I continued my dental studies with him at Columbia. I found him a kind and true friend, always ready to give me every advantage in his power, his kindness and interest gained my warmest esteem and lasting friendship. His genial, urbane manners and intelligence, gained for him the highest esteem of the community in which he resided, and with the medical profession the highest regard for honesty and skill. In commencing the dental practice in South Carolina, I found his recommendation a sure passport to success. After two years in South Carolina and three in Havana, I came North and found my old friend located in New York in successful practice. He again interested himself for me, giving me instruction in the manufacture of mineral teeth. Many years passed and many changes before we met again, but last August I was happily surprised by a visit from him at my house. He came at 10 o'clock A. M., and sat with me eight hours. You may imagine how pleasantly these hours passed with us reviewing the last forty years, and various events of that time. In closing, I can only say, your uncle had many rare qualities of mind and heart, and years had not lessened them, and the memory of his friendship and kindness to me will be treasured to the last.

I am, most respectfully,

JOHN TUCKER, M. D.

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SCHOHARIE, N. Y., May 18, 1866.

J. G. AMBLER.—DEAR DOCTOR,—I received your paper last evening informing me of the death of Doctor D. C. Ambler, by drowning in St. Johns River, Florida, with feelings of profound regret. It at once recalled to my mind my parting with him at your house last fall, when he appeared so full of life and vigor and hope of harmonizing all secession feeling in Florida, and restoring it to the Union, and what investments he had made in stocks of all kinds of plants and seeds that were adapted to that climate. I was almost tempted to go to Florida with him. It likewise recalled the time when I was a student with him, in Park Place, more than thirty years since, of his uniform kindness and generosity towards me then. Intimate contact with the world, and in the conflict with human life since has forcibly impressed upon my mind that there are but few such men; he was truly a scientific man, his object in life didn't seem to be so much personal aggrandizement as the development of truth, and

what was for the general good, and he came up fully to my idea of what is generally meant by the appellation of one of nature's noblemen. I wish to bear this, my humble tribute of esteem, to his memory.

Yours truly,

DANIEL KNOWER.

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OGDENSBURG, N. Y., April 12th, 1866.

DRS. BURRAS, ALLEN AND FITCH, COMMITTEE.—GENTLEMEN.—I am in receipt of the notice of the eulogy on Dr. D. C. Ambler, by Dr. J. G. Ambler, the 4th inst. I regret I cannot attend.

The reception of this notice calls up reminiscences at once pleasant and painful; painful in that I shall never meet that dear friend again; pleasant in the memory of happy hours in his society—hours of keenest pleasure, and I trust of profit—for no one could have known Dr. Ambler intimately without receiving benefit.

It was my good fortune to have been a student under him, and had good opportunity to know him in all relations in life.

As a husband and father, as a man and Christian, and as a member of our profession, he was an honor to all.

Dr. Ambler was eminently "one in whom the elements were so wrapped up, that nature could stand up and say to all the world. *This was a man.*"

Yours, respectfully,

S. S. BLODGETT, D. D. S.











